

CJTF-HOA



Our Mission:

Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa conducts operations in the Combined Joint Operations Area to enhance partner nation capacity, promote regional stability, dissuade conflict, and protect U.S. and coalition interests.

Our Vision:

CJTF-HOA builds and strengthens partnerships to contribute to security and stability in East Africa. The task force's efforts, as part of a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, are aimed at increasing our African partner nations' capacity to maintain a stable environment, with an effective government that provides a degree of economic and social advancement to its citizens. An Africa that is stable, participates in free and fair markets, and contributes to global economic development is good for the United States as well as the rest of the world. Long term stability is a vital interest of all nations.

Family Gram

Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa

Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti

December 2011



Service members from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa Forward Operating Location Kenyasi traveled to Suubi Children's Home in Entebbe, Uganda, to deliver stuffed animals Oct. 15. Members of FOL Kenyasi volunteer at the children's home weekly. The stuffed animals were donated by Loving Hugs, an American organization based in Littleton, Colo., and founded by a former U.S. soldier who was inspired to help injured children in Iraq. Loving Hugs now partners with the U.S. Navy, along with non-profit organizations, to deliver stuffed animals to children worldwide, including 17 countries in Africa. The service members hope to bring more stuffed animals to children's homes in Uganda in the future. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Commander Brendan Collins)

Holiday Greetings from CJTF-HOA

On behalf of all the service members in the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, I send warm Holiday greetings to the families and friends supporting us overseas. It is your unending support which allows our soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen serving with CJTF-HOA to carry on our tasks.

As we approach the end of 2011, I'm happy to say that we've successfully covered missions across 14 East African nations.

We have also had a number of significant events occur throughout the year, from visits from the Secretary of Defense, to foreign digni-

taries marveling at the work being done by the staff here.

CJTF-HOA remains a busy place, and our service members continue to meet every challenge placed before them.

This edition of the CJTF-HOA Family Gram is just a small sampling of the outstanding things your service members continue to do every day.

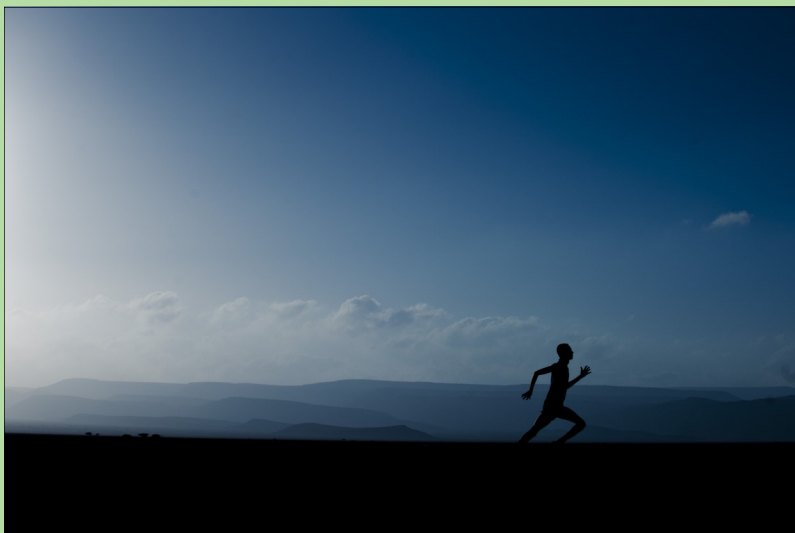
**Rear Admiral Mike Franken, USN
Commander, CJTF-HOA**

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Multinational forces compete in Grand Bara 15K



A runner sprints for the finish line during the 29th Annual Grand Bara 15k race in the Grand Bara Desert, Djibouti, December 8. More than 250 members from Camp Lemonnier participated in the race. (Photos by Staff Sergeant Jonathon Steffen)

Story by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch, CJTF-HOA PAO

GRAND BARA DESERT, Djibouti – The French general stood pride fully amongst the hundreds of troops standing before him just as the sun started to peek over the horizon. His voice resonated with pride and determination as he motivated the troops before the battle they were about to enter. Each and every person – no matter their rank, nationality or service - knew what had to be done. As three fighter jets providing close air support flew overhead, the men and women broke ranks and surged forward.

Their goal was not a military victory, but a finish line. More than 1,300 French, Djiboutian, U.S. and German service members and civilians competed in the 29th Annual Grand Bara 15k race hosted by the 5th Combined Overseas Marine Battalion in the Grand Bara Desert, Djibouti, Dec. 8.

A row of rocks guides runners at the 29th Annual Grand Bara 15k race in the Grand Bara Desert, Djibouti, Dec. 8. The rocks laid out a path through the desert for runners to follow.



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490th Civil Affairs: Civil affairs team encourages students

Story by 1st Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff, CJTF-HOA PAO

DJIBOUTI, Djibouti – The U.S. Army 4902nd Civil Affairs Team put its teaching skills to work, using artwork and colorful flip charts to encourage students to pitch in for their school and community. Pitch in trash, that is.

The team, which is part of the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion from the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, launched a trash awareness program at Ecole de Quartier 5 School for the students in coordination with Djibouti City officials and the local Djiboutian trash company, OVD.



U.S. Army Spc. Tiffany Larriba, member of Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, paints a picture originally drawn by an Ecole de Quartier 5 School student on a trash can at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Dec. 5. The colorful receptacle was presented to the school Dec. 6 with three others also painted by Larriba, as part of a trash awareness program initiated by the CA team in coordination with the school, Djibouti City officials and a local Djiboutian trash company. Photos by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch.



Students from Ecole de Quartier 5 School gather outside to listen to members of Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, talk about the benefits of picking up trash around their school in Djibouti, Djibouti, Dec. 6. The team, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, provided four new trash cans painted with the students' art to the school as part of a trash awareness program. (Photos by 1st Lt. Kathleen Atanasoff)

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490th Civil Affairs:

Eco-dome will help build sense of community

Story by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch

KARATBI SAN, Djibouti - Local villagers, Djiboutian service members and soldiers from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, worked side by side on an eco-dome in Karatbi San, Djibouti, Nov. 29 through Dec. 2.

The project is a part of an ongoing effort between CJTF-HOA, the Djiboutian military, villagers, non-government organizations and international organizations to provide Karatbi San, a remote village in the Tadjourah region of Djibouti, with a community building.



KARATBI SAN, Djibouti - Local villagers, Djiboutian service members and soldiers from the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Team 4902, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, worked side by side on an eco-dome in Karatbi San, Djibouti, Nov. 29 through Dec. 2. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch)

402nd Civil Affairs:

Kenyan soldiers train, prepare for civil affairs mission

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Marc Lane, CJTF-HOA PAO

EMBAKASI, Kenya -Nineteen Kenyan army engineers from multiple units finished a five-day civil affairs field training exercise at the Amani Peace Operations Training Village in Embakasi, Kenya, Oct. 21.

The soldiers participated in a series of scenarios designed and implemented by an instruction team made up of seven engineers from the Kenyan army and facilitated by five U.S. Army soldiers from the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion attached to Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa.



Kenyan army engineers talk to role players acting as members of a village to assess damage to a building during a civil affairs field training exercise in Embakasi, Kenya, Oct. 17. The soldiers honed negotiation and mediation skills with indigenous populations to lessen the potential impact of military operations

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22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit:



A C-130 Hercules prepares to land on an austere landing zone set up by the Marine Air Traffic Control Mobile Team, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, Oct. 27. The MMT maintained communication with the C-130 crew during its landing from the side of the landing zone. The six-man MMT used brightly colored panels and phantom lights to set up a 3,000-foot air strip. An ALZ can be set up on old runways, dirt strips or any long, flat area.

US Marines set up austere landing zone

Story and photos by Specialist Michelle Lawrence.
CJTF-HOA PAO

CHABELLEY AIRFIELD, Djibouti – As the sun slowly descended behind the mountains overlooking Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, a small group of U.S. Marines quickly prepared their gear to turn a barren stretch of desert into a makeshift runway.

For the Marine Air Traffic Control Mobile Team, a six-man team from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, homeported at Camp Lejeune, N.C., setting up an austere landing zone in time for an aircraft to safely land is just part of the job.



U.S. Marine Sgt. Blake Alvarez, Marine Air Traffic Control Mobile Team air traffic control communication technician, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, sets up a phantom light while creating an austere landing zone at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, Oct. 21. Phantom lights are used to mark the ALZ for night operations.



U.S. Marine Sgt. Christopher Bickel, Marine Air Traffic Control Mobile Team assistant team leader, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, prepares his night vision goggles before checking the alignment of phantom lights on an austere landing zone at Chabelley Airfield, Djibouti, Oct. 21. Bickel is originally from Lima, Ohio. He is part of a team that sets up ALZs, which allow aircraft such as C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster III cargo transport aircraft to land anywhere in the world, day or night.

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22nd MEU:

US Marines and Djiboutian GIGN forces exchange 'warrior ethos'

Story and photos by Sue Ulibarri, CJTF-HOA PAO

CHEIK MOUSSA, Djibouti - For a small contingent of U.S. Marines assigned to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS Bataan, a respite from the metal confines of the ship allowed for an exchange of warrior skills and tactics with members of Djibouti's premier reactionary force, the Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale, at Cheik Moussa, Djibouti, Nov. 13 to Dec. 2.

The exchange designated U.S. Marines from the Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, to conduct infantry-specific exercises in close-combat techniques, enhanced marksmanship and vehicle operation.



U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Josh Guffey (standing) and U.S. Marine Sgt. Phillip Garza, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor trainers, Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, based out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., demonstrates and briefs members of Djibouti's Group d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale on MCMAP techniques during MCMAP drills at the Centre d'Instruction Ministere de la Defense, Cheik Moussa, Djibouti, Nov. 19.



U.S. Marine Sgt. Kapeielu Faiivae (left), black belt Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor, Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, based out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., demonstrates the proper technique for crawling with an individual holding him down to members of the Djibouti's Group d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program combat fitness exercises during MCMAP training at Djibouti's Centre d'Instruction Ministere de la Defense, Cheik Moussa, Djibouti, Nov. 19. Faiivae, a native of American Samoa, along with other U.S. Marines from the USS Bataan, participated in a bilateral training program with the GIGN, Nov. 13 to Dec. 2.

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Seabees:

Fútbol and folk dancing: NMCB 5 experience African culture

Story and photos by Senior Airman Jarad Denton, CJTF-HOA PAO

KONTALI, Djibouti - As the four-wheel drive vehicles shuddered and lurched over the rocky dirt road, Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 caught a glimpse of the Kontali village as it appeared on the horizon, nearly hidden by the mid-day sun, Oct. 1.

The small village, which sits atop a hill overlooking a vast expanse of dry land, was bustling with activity as villagers hurried to make the final preparations for a fútbol game and cultural festival held for the Seabees.

"They [the Seabees] have helped us so much," said Ibrahim Idriss Mohamed, a Kontali elder and village council member.



A student from Kontali, Djibouti, loses a sandal while kicking a ball during a fútbol game against Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, Oct. 1. The fútbol game and subsequent festival allowed the Kontali people to share their cultural heritage with the Seabees, who worked closely with them on a project to improve the local schoolhouse



Kontali schoolhouse students glance from their classroom as villagers prepare the schoolyard for a traditional African dance presentation at Kontali, Djibouti, Oct. 1. The people of the village presented the dance festival as a way of sharing their culture with the service members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, who partnered with the village to make improvements to their schoolhouse.



Villagers from Kontali, Djibouti, perform a traditional African wedding dance during a cultural festival put on for Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 at the Kontali schoolhouse, Oct. 1. The wedding dance was the final element of a three-part presentation, which included dances about a marriage proposal and a battle over a beloved woman.

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161st FA Battalion

Rwandan, US soldiers conduct leadership course

**Story by Specialist Michelle Lawrence,
CJTF-HOA PAO**

GAKO, Rwanda – A team of soldiers from the 1st Battalion 161st Field Artillery Kansas Army National Guard recently returned from a 10-day mission to Gako, Rwanda, where they conducted a company grade and non-commissioned officer course with the Rwanda Defense Force.

The course consisted of sharing different leadership skills that enhanced the soldiers understanding of what it means to be a leader and how to take care of and command their troops.

According to U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Cadena, 1-161 FA, the course, consisting of 71 soldiers, 51 non-commissioned officers and 20 officers, was split down the middle into two platoons with no regard to rank.



U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Cadena, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery Kansas Army National Guard, discusses task organization with a Rwanda Defense Force company commander during a break after class at the Gako Military Academy in Gako, Rwanda, October 19. Cadena along with other soldiers from Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa traveled to Gako to share leadership skills with the RDF. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tony Kirk)



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Benjamin Ronning, 1st Battalion 161st Field Artillery Kansas Army National Guard, assists the Rwanda Defense Force team leaders by giving them guidance during a trust-building exercise at the Gako Military Academy in Gako, Rwanda, Oct. 14. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Dean)

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French, US service members undergo desert survival training

*Story and photos by Staff Sergeant
Jonathon Steffen, CJTF-HOA PAO*

GOUBETTO, Djibouti - As the morning sun peered through a tangled web of acacia tree branches, service members from France and the U.S. sat on the rocky ground of the Grand Bara Desert near Goubetto, Djibouti, listening to an instructor detail proper caravan troop placement.

The lesson was part of the French military's 10-day Desert Survival Combat Course, Nov. 1-10, which spanned more than 50 miles and included French Marines and U.S. service members.



A French marine from the 5th Infantry Overseas Battalion pins the Desert Survival and Combat Course pin on U.S. Marine Lance Corporal Isaiah Henderson, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, Nov. 10. The DSCC, instructed by French Marines, teaches how to fight and survive in a desert environment. Henderson, originally from Oakland, Calif., is one of 16 Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit to complete the course.



French marines and U.S. service members prepare food during the Desert Survival and Combat Course Nov. 6. The 10-day course brought French and U.S. service members together to learn how to fight and survive in the desert.

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Information warfare warriors: Camp Lemonnier certifies first IDWS class

Story and photos by Senior Airman Jarad Denton, CJTF-HOA PAO

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti - For the first time in Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti's eight-year history, 12 U.S. Navy sailors stationed on camp were certified in the Information Dominance Warfare Specialist program - a branch of the Navy warfare qualification program focused on information dominance, Oct. 21.

The sailors, seven active duty and five reservists, have worked since March 2011 to implement and participate in the IDWS program on camp.

"Regardless of what command [a sailor] is in, he or she needs to understand the mission and how to contribute to it," said Command Master Chief Petty Officer Loretta Glenn, camp senior enlisted leader.



U.S. Navy sailors display their recently earned information dominance warfare specialist devices at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Oct. 29. Seven active duty and five reservist sailors worked since March 2011 to implement and participate in the first IDWS program on camp.



U.S. Army Lt. Col. James Toomey, United States Embassy to the Republic of Djibouti senior defense official and defense attache, salutes after placing a U.S. flag during a ceremony on Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 13, at the Djibouti New European Cemetery here. During the ceremony, participants honored 13 men who died during World War II with song, prayers, poems and scripture, two minutes of silence as well as the laying of wreaths and a U.S. flag.

Honoring those who gave all: Remembrance Sunday in Africa

Story and photos by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch, CJTF-HOA PAO

DJIBOUTI, Djibouti – More than 35 service members and civilians representing several nations including the U.K., France, and United States, participated in a ceremony on Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 13, at the Djibouti New European Cemetery here to remember the members of their armed forces who have died in the line of duty.

"These were young men ... who gave their lives here," said British Army Col. Mike Scott, the senior British military liaison officer with the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa. "

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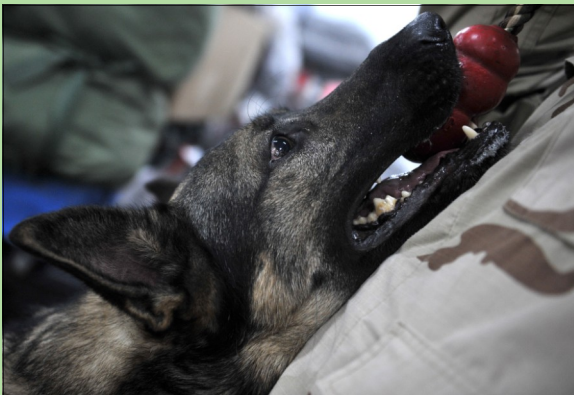
K-9s stand guard in Africa

Story and photos by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch, CJTF-HOA PAO

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti – Sailors and their furry, four-legged partners deploy all over the world with one mission: to detect and defend.

The working military dogs stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, in the Horn of Africa ensure that mission is completed on a daily basis.

“The K-9 unit here is tasked with the protection of the base,” said U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Abraham, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and military working dog handler. “We keep an eye on anything that comes on and off base. We are the first line of defense.”



Karo, a 4-year-old German Shepherd military working dog, bites his toy, which is being held by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class George Simoni, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and military working dog handler, after successfully finding contraband during a detection training exercise at the Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, post office, Sept. 13.



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class George Simoni, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and military working dog handler, works with Dax, a 4-and-a-half-year-old German Shepherd military working dog, during a patrol training exercise at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 26. According to Dax's handler, U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Yourg, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and K-9 kennel supervisor, Dax is a "friendly and energetic shepherd." Although Dax is the second-youngest member of Camp Lemonnier K-9, he is the ranking member. Military working dogs assume one rank higher than their handler, to ensure they are treated with respect. Simoni hails from Carthage, N.C., and is deployed from Naval Air Station Key West, Fla.



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Yourg, left, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and K-9 kennel supervisor, agitates Rado, an 8-year-old German Shepherd military working dog, while U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Arthur Vaughan, Camp Lemonnier master-at-arms and military working dog handler, restrains him during a patrol training exercise at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Aug. 26. The exercise is designed to keep military working dogs proficient in tactics used during patrols. Yourg hails from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and is deployed from Naval Base San Diego, Calif. Vaughan is a native of Orlando, Fla. Vaughan and his partner Rado are deployed from Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va.

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U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class David Ampofo, information systems specialist forward deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, was born in Accra, Ghana, and currently lives in Lawrenceville, Ga. Ampofo has spent more than 10 years in the Navy Reserve balancing the citizen-sailor lifestyle.

A bridge between cultures

Story and photo by Senior Airman Jarad Denton, CJTF-HOA PAO

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti – Sitting across from U.S. Navy Reserve Petty Officer 1st Class David Ampofo, an information systems specialist, he comes across as any other sailor in the United States Navy.

His uniform is crisp, clean and smartly put together. His broad smile reflects a deep pride that comes from more than 10 years of service.

His accent gives him away. "I was born in Accra, Ghana," said the petty officer who is now homebased in Lawrenceville, Ga. "I used to work for the U.S. State Department in Africa, so I have traveled quite a bit throughout the continent."

It was following his last assignment in Uganda, according to Ampofo, that he decided to resign his position with the U.S. State Department and move to The United States. He worked several jobs before deciding to pursue his college education.

Kenyan, US Chaplains exchange best practices

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Stephen Linch, CJTF-HOA PAO

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti - In an opportunity to engage with his U.S. military counterparts, a Kenyan Ministry of State for Defense chaplain spent three weeks exchanging best practices with Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa and Camp Lemonnier chaplains from multiple denominations to strengthen each other's military chaplaincy programs.

The visit, from Aug. 29 to Sept. 16, allowed KMoSD Muslim Imam (Major) Rajab Athumani to witness firsthand how his American counterparts interacted with service members from different services and denominations while seeing how different programs and facilities fit into the overall chaplaincy program.



U.S. Army Spc. Shaju Ahmed, 1-161 Field Artillery, and Kenyan army Maj. Iman Rajab Athumani, Muslim chaplain, stop together for a photograph at the prayer tent here, Sept. 8.

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CJTF-HOA Visits:

The Honorable Leon Panetta, U.S. Secretary of Defense



The Honorable Leon Panetta, U.S. Secretary of Defense, addresses service members stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Dec. 13. During his visit, Panetta extended his best wishes and heartfelt gratitude to all service members deployed in the Horn of Africa. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Marc Lane, CJTF-HOA PAO)



The Honorable Leon Panetta, U.S. Secretary of Defense, addresses service members stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Dec. 13. Panetta said the role U.S. service members play in supporting their nation is securing the future for the children of generations to come.

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Sergeant Major of the Army Ray Chandler



CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti (Dec. 16, 2011) – Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler discusses what his post duties entail with U.S. Army Specialist Charlie Beuttel, 1st Battalion 161st Field Artillery Kansas Army National Guard, as they look out from the tower overlooking an entry control point on Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, December 16. Beuttel is originally from Pomona, Kansas. Chandler visited with soldiers at a variety of work sections on the camp and at the Djibouti port. (U.S. Army photo by Specialist Michelle C. Lawrence)

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West gets a hands-on look of the work Seabees do at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, from U.S. Navy Seaman Jennifer Ross, a Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 steelworker, Dec. 9. West, the 12th MCPON, visited the camp to interact with sailors and address the questions and issues affecting them. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jeremy Brandt, CJTF-HOA PAO)